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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

ON SUNDAY, THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY, 1796.

SE R M O N

PREACHED IN 1842

Cathedral Church of St. John

ON THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JESUS

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S E R M O N

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PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

THE

JUDGES,

ALDERMEN, SERJEANTS AT LAW,

SHERIFFS,

AND

CITY OFFICERS,

ON SUNDAY, THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY, 1796,

BEING THE

First Sunday in Trinity Term.

BY THE REV^d THOMAS ROBERTS, A. M.

CHAPLAIN TO HIS LORDSHIP.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. WILSON, ST. PETER'S-HILL, DOCTORS'-COMMONS.

MDCCXCVI.

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

THE

JUDGES,

WILDERMEN, SHERIFFS, AT LAW,

SHERIFFS,

AND

CITY OF LONDON.

ON SUNDAY THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY 1796.

BY THE

Rev. George Burdett

BY THE REV. GEORGE BURDETT, A.M.

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL.

LONDON,

PRINTED BY W. WILSON, ST. MARK'S LANE, NEAR ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.

1796.

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CURTIS, MAYOR.

*A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall of the City of
London, on Thursday the 13th Day of October, 1796.*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

THAT the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend THOMAS ROBERTS, Chaplain to the Right Honourable the LORD-MAYOR, for his excellent Sermons preached before his LORDSHIP, the JUDGES, ALDERMEN, SERJEANTS AT LAW, SHERIFFS, and CITY OFFICERS, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, on the Seventeenth of April, and the Twenty-Ninth of May last, being the First Sundays in Easter and Trinity Terms, and that he be desired to print the same, and cause a Copy thereof to be sent to the LORD MAYOR, JUDGES, ALDERMEN, SERJEANTS AT LAW, SHERIFFS, and CITY OFFICERS, and to the MEMBERS of this COURT.

R I X.

CHRISTIANITY

THE GOSPEL

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

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TO THE
Right Honourable WILLIAM CURTIS,
LORD MAYOR,

THE
WORSHIPFUL THE ALDERMEN,

THE
RECORDER, THE SHERIFFS,

AND THE
COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONDON,

THIS
S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

ON THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY, 1796,

AND PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

LONDON,
OCT. 28, 1796.

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE
Right Honorable WILLIAM CURTIS

LORD MAYOR

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

RECORDED IN THE RECORDS

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

ALBION

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

RECORDED IN THE RECORDS

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

THE

PSALM CXXII. VERSES 8, 9.

FOR MY BRETHREN AND COMPANIONS SAKE, I WILL NOW SAY, PEACE
BE WITHIN THEE. BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD,
I WILL SEEK THY GOOD.

THE title informs us, this Psalm was composed by David; and the Jewish Masters assure us, that it was chanted by the people when they entered Jerusalem, at their solemn festivals. The subject matter of the Psalm corresponds with this tradition, it being evidently a festival song calculated to excite pious extasy, and express patriotic joy at the approach to Jerusalem, the metropolis of their nation, and the seat of their government, religion, and public worship. After other expressions of gladness, the Psalmist piously exhorts them “to pray for the peace of Jerusalem,” annexing this glorious
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reward—" they shall prosper that love thee." The Hebrew word, peace, comprehends all manner of blessing and happiness, and which is emphatically expressed in the common version of the psalms, " prosperity : " " For my brethren and " companions sake, I will now say, peace be within thee (or " I will wish thee prosperity.) Because of the house of the " Lord our God, I will seek thy good."

This Psalm, it has been observed, was used as a triumphal hymn on great and solemn occasions on the entering of Jerusalem—we may apply it to the glorious history of this day—it was on this day that Charles the Second was restored to the throne and government of these kingdoms, and on this day he made his triumphal entry into the metropolis. A period of somewhat more than twelve years intervened between the death of one king and the return of another.* The returning good sense of Englishmen, and the general inclination to monarchy powerfully prevailed. The City of London, with the true spirit of loyalty, and the fleet, the glorious bulwark of England, having previously declared for the restoration of the monarch, it was happily compleated on this day. Possessed at this time of a much envied, because the
most

* From January 30, 1648—to May 29, 1660.

most excellent constitution in Church and State, let us cherish and support it with our united powers, and hand it down to our posterity as a legacy of inestimable value. “ For
 “ my brethren and companions sake, I will now say, peace
 “ be within thee, because of the house of the Lord our
 “ God I will seek thy good.”

The words naturally lead me to consider what is the character of a true and zealous promoter of the public peace and happiness, or rather point out to us the distinguishing properties and excellencies of this important duty. This double duty, ardent love, and watchful protection to our country, with fervent zeal, and reverential respect for the Christian Religion established among us, will, I trust, ever operate with powerful energy on our hearts, and prove an “ anchor
 “ to the soul, both sure and steadfast.” It is the observation of an eminent modern writer*—“ That we live under a constitution, which is so wisely contrived, so strongly raised, and so highly finished, that it is hard to speak of it with that praise which is justly and severely its due.” Notwithstanding this just and merited encomium, yet we find the enemies of the peace and happiness of mankind would willingly

* Blackstone, end of the Fourth Volume.

lingly seek occasion to raise unfounded jealousies, and have craftily endeavoured to alienate the affections of the people from the laws of our glorious constitution, to undermine the powers of political obedience, and enervate the principles and precepts of religion. There cannot be a more convincing proof of a profligate and abandoned mind, than to be void of love to our country, and concern for its prosperity and happiness. This was the standard of praise and glory with the Greeks and Romans, and all the lines of their admired virtue, like the radii of a circle, were made to centre in this important point, the *Amor Patriæ*. That holy religion we profess, so far from discouraging that generous and disinterested regard we ought to have for the public welfare, that it animates us to it on more exalted principles, and with superior obligations than ever were enforced by natural religion, or Pagan rites and ceremonies; in this sense, the blessed Author of our religion may be said—"that he came not to destroy the law," (that law which enjoins the love of our country, and obedience to its laws), "but to fulfil it." Under the Gospel dispensation, we are taught to consider ourselves not merely as members of the same political body, but as members of the body of Christ. Every Christian nation is, indeed, a part of this body, but that nation to which we are more immediately

diately conjoined, and with which we live in actual and present communion, will, of necessity, have a more extensive share of our care and concern, and claim a more spirited protection and regard than those which are more remote. The general principles of humanity will direct us to promote the good of the human race, but a social and relative concern will induce us in the first instance—"to pray for the peace of our own Jerusalem." We are members of the same community, and as such, ought to promote the good and happiness of it; this community is a Christian community, and, I hope, with the Divine protection, will ever flourish and prosper. We have one faith, one baptism, one hope of our calling; we are members of the same state, protected by the same laws, and governed by the same King. Hence arises this double obligation to promote—"the peace of our Jerusalem."

In opposition, however, to these admired scenes of social happiness and union, we find the spirit of discord, and reform, busily at work, endeavouring to disunite our social from our religious obligations. The same principles and persuasions brought the First Charles to the block, and banished the Second. Constant experience, the consent and ap-

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probation

probation of the good and wise, particularly the history of this day, added to the internal character of Church and State, prove their consistency, and give mutual strength, energy, and assistance. We need but examine the truth of this position. The interest of the State is, that obedience, order, and good government, should be maintained; that justice may be equally administered, and all ranks and degrees of men enjoy their respective legal rights; that industry, temperance, and sobriety be encouraged; that truth and honesty may be applauded, fraud and deceit detected and exposed; that the governing part of the nation may be men of public spirit, integrity, and independent principles; that the governed, enjoying the benefit of protection of the laws, may cheerfully regulate their behaviour in all dutiful subjection, and detest sedition, tumult, and rebellion. The exercise of these virtues is the mutual interest of our glorious constitution, the bond that unites our social and civil liberties, and the laws of religion do equally require, and expressly command them, but with this superior force and authority—"not only
 "for wrath, but for conscience sake."

The interest of the moral and religious duties of mankind, if they are distinguished from their civil and political ones,
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is, that the fear, love, and worship of Almighty God be maintained in their full dignity ; that the honour and reverence due to God be preserved in the hearts and affections of men ; that the tenets of Deism, prophaneness, false philosophy, or free-thinking be diligently guarded against ; that the truths revealed to us by his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, especially the fundamental ones on which he said he would build his church, be taught, explained, and defended ; that those who are employed, or commissioned to teach, explain and defend the truths of religion, and to minister in holy things, be protected, encouraged, and treated as stewards over the household of God, and ministers of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. Religion, in all ages, has been anxiously protected by law, because the laws are insufficient to secure the peace and happiness of society without religion.

It is also evident, that some of the most interesting duties of man, as an accountable creature, rest on principles independent of civil authority. Notwithstanding this truth, an idolatrous admiration of the goddess of reason and a misguided policy, have endeavoured, and are still endeavouring to persuade mankind that there may be morality enough to answer all the purposes of government without the persuasion,

sion, instruction, or assistance of the priesthood ; that morals, the result of human reason will be fully sufficient, without the aid and assistance of divine Revelation, principles which would hide the beauty and perfection of moral virtue, under the hideous garb of professed, and even of applauded Atheism.

In opposition to such profane and dangerous notions, I will endeavour to shew that the belief, fear, reverence, and worship of Almighty God—the truths revealed to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the sacred writings—the authority of his ministers, and the government and discipline of our established church, mutually depend on each other, and the peace and happiness of the people on them, as evidently as natural effects depend on their causes.

The laws of religion require the belief, fear, reverence, and worship due to Almighty God. These principles have undoubtedly a powerful influence on mankind, restraining the inclinations of some, and correcting the vicious propensities of others. There are some, indeed, that neither fear God, or regard man, like Gallio, “ who care for none of those “ things ;” but there are but few in comparison with the number

ber who stand in awe of divine or human laws, who dread detection in this life, and the fear of eternal punishment in reversion ; but the question is, whether human laws and punishments are sufficient for this end and purpose, and have such universal and effectual influence as the belief and fear of God ? It is evident human laws cannot extend to all cases, they must first insure detection, and even in those cases which fall under their cognizance, there are various ways for the guilty evading punishment ; whereas the belief and fear of God lays a restraint on the thoughts and intents of the heart, and leaves no hopes of evasion where guilt is wilfully contracted or obstinately pursued. We must acknowledge with shame and regret, that mankind are daringly wicked and corrupt, but they would be much worse, even without controul, impelled like waves of the sea, were the belief of God's power and providence doubted or destroyed. Deism would soon introduce a general corruption, and in its train would follow discord, faction, and all the dire suggestions of mis-guided reason. Experience proves that in the same proportion, that the fear of God and principles of religion have degenerated, all integrity and truth, mutual trust and confidence, the only support of civil society, became languid and distrustful. When the human mind is tainted with doubt and disbelief, the love

of virtue, or the dread of punishment will have but little effect. Who then would exchange real security, to embrace speculative and visionary reform, founded only in wanton imagination and the fond effusions of human infirmity.

Secondly. The Gospel of Christ, and the sacred writings, not only contain the purest precepts and comprehensive rules of civil life, but by the clear revelation of a future state, strongly enforce their practice. The Christian religion does not leave men at liberty, whether they will observe them or not, but requires governors and subjects to perform their respective parts, under pain of wrath and eternal vengeance from him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. The Gospel does not prescribe or enjoin any particular form of government, but leaving that to be settled by the laws and constitutions of every country, yet the Gospel requires submission to the powers that are, that all Christians pay obedience to the civil laws and constitutions of the nation and country where they live—"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," flowed from the lips of truth. The denying the truth of the Christian religion evidently weakens the belief of those principles of natural religion, the being and providence of God, which even the opposers of Christianity will allow necessary,

necessary, or at least convenient and serviceable to the ends of government, and by consequence prove themselves enemies to civil order. It is certainly a slender boundary and easy transition from Deism to Atheism, and when men are once induced to think that God never concerned himself to reveal his will to mankind, they will be brought to imagine he disregards their actions, and at length deny the being of a God. Those who deny the faith of Christ, seldom retain any reverence to the Almighty, or sense of duty to him; those who profanely ridicule the Gospel, or totally disregard its divine institutions, pursue the readiest course to banish all belief and fear of God, and his superintending Providence. Divest Christianity of its faith and doctrines, and you deprive it of its spiritual consolations and divine sanctions. You even supercede revelation itself; or at least you reduce it to the cold and ineffectual semblance of philosophy, that philosophy which has of late endeavoured to usurp the venerable seat of learning and religion, and in their place to introduce sophistry and atheism; you reduce it to the humble standard of human reason, you exhibit it as the delusive shadow of a firm substance, the baseless fabric of departed principles.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. That the Christian religion is a revelation from God, is a matter of fact, and that fact depends for its proof and evidence on a number of other facts of an extraordinary and miraculous nature recorded in the New Testament, the truth of which manifestly confirms the principle fact. Let not therefore the enemies of the cross of Christ produce mere assertion or bold invective instead of sound argument; let them disprove the several facts which support Christianity, and convince the understanding of mankind by clear demonstration or historical proof; let them prove that so many extraordinary predictions of the Old Testament were never fulfilled in the New; that the astonishing miracles recorded as wrought by Christ and his Apostles, were never performed, but that the whole was the contrivance and invention of man; till this can be established with clear and satisfactory evidence, every candid and considerate mind will have full confidence in the sacred writings, will humbly contemplate the wonderful works of Christ and his Apostles, and, with true faith, “run with patience the race which is set before them, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of their faith.”

Let us then offer up our sincere acknowledgments and devout praises to the Father of mercies, that we are blessed
with

with such a happy constitution in Church and State, that unites every social indulgence to each individual, in the protection of person and property, with the spiritual consolation arising from a sound faith, and pure religion. The true happiness of every individual consists in maintaining a perfect harmony and concord between them; mutual animosities, unfounded jealousies, and chimerical reform, will engender confusion, and hence will follow ruin and destruction. It is the duty of every good Christian, and every true friend to peace, order, and good government, to obviate and prevent the bitter effects of dissensions, to watch against the madness of parties, and to convince men, that to undermine religion will destroy our civil liberty; and while law protects religion, it advances its own power and authority. What the Magistrate guards, the Christian Minister should expound, illustrate, and defend.

Whenever the Christian Religion is attacked, let us not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, let us boldly stand in the front of the battle, let us put on the whole armour of God, and encounter the fiery darts of the wicked. Whenever the Gospel is openly ridiculed, and its sacred institutions made the scorn of infidels, it is incumbent on every

lover of order to take up the cross, to be instant in season and out of season, and imitate their heavenly Leader.

“ For my brethren and companions sake, I will now say,
 “ peace be within thee, because of the house of the Lord
 “ our God, I will seek to do thee good.” This, no doubt, is
 the hearty desire and endeavour of all good men, whether
 Clergy or Laity, or whatever our rank or station in life may
 be; but if the torrent of infidelity and corruption should ever
 prove too strong, and all our honest endeavours are borne
 down by the encountering tides of faction and sedition on
 the one hand, and profaneness and impiety on the other,
 we may conclude the glorious fabric of our happiness, both
 as a Church and a Nation, is dashing on a rock, both will
 sink together, and we shall be in greater jeopardy than the
 disciples were, and have more need to say—“ Lord save
 “ us, we perish!” Instead of applying, by way of parallel,
 the state of Jerusalem as it stood in David’s time—“ Jeru-
 “ salem is built as a city that is at unity with itself, for
 “ thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, to
 “ testify unto Israel, and to give thanks in the name of the
 “ Lord;” instead of this joyful and happy description, we
 shall find too much reason to draw a parallel between us
 and

and Jerusalem when it was in another situation, when our Blessed Lord came near the city, and beheld it, and wept over it, saying—" If thou hadst known, even thou, at least
 " in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!
 " but now they are hid from thine eyes!"

To avert such a melancholy reflection, let us, to our own pious and zealous endeavours, let us sincerely join in the prayer of the Psalmist—" Save me, and deliver me from
 " the hand of strange children; whose mouth talketh of
 " vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity.
 " That our sons may grow up as the young plants; and
 " that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the
 " temple. That our garners may be full and plenteous
 " with all manner of store; that our sheep may bring forth
 " thousands and ten thousands in our streets. That our oxen
 " may be strong to labour, that there be no decay; no leading into captivity, no complaining in our streets. Happy
 " are the people who are in such a case; yea, blessed are
 " the people who have the Lord for their God."

Now to God the Father, &c.

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and Jerusalem when it was the ancient sanctuary, when our
Blessed Lord came near the city and beheld it, and wept
over it, saying—If thou hadst known even these things at least
in this day, the things which belong unto thy peace!
But now they are hid from thine eyes!

To weep such a melancholy reflection, let us, to our own
pious and anxious endeavours, let us sincerely join in the
prayer of the Psalmist—Give me, and deliver me from
the hand of strange children; whose power is still in
me, and whose hand is a right hand of indignation.
That our loss may grow up as the young plants, and
that our daughters may be as the polished stones of the
temple. That our gardens may be full and pleasant
with all manner of fruit; that our sheep may bring forth
hundreds and ten thousands in our stead. That our oxen
may be strong to labour, that there be no decay; no still
and idle captivity, no complaining in our stead. Happy
are the people whose God is the Lord of Hosts, the
God of Israel.

Now is the time for the people to

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